Contingency plan for realising tax outstanding against Sahara Group

5049. SHRIRAJNATH SINGH 'SURYA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is a contingency plan for realising outstanding tax arrears from the corporate houses which runs in thousands of crores;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether action is being initiated against tax defaulters like Sahara India Financial Corpn., Sahara Mutual Benefit Co., Sahara India and IFCI;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, what action has been proposed against companies mentioned above?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI GINGEE N. RAMACHANDRAN): (a) and (b) In the case of default in payment of tax, the Income-tax Act prescribes specific provisions for recovery which include charging of interest, levy of penalty, attachement of bank accounts and debtors' accounts, attachment and sale of moveable and immovable properties of the defaulters, arrest and detention of defaulter in prison. Depending on the facts and circumstances of the individual cases,, the recovery measures are being taken.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) and (e) Action under various penal provisions of the IT Act, 1961 has been taken in all these cases. Appellate authorities have also been requested for speedy disposal of appeals.

Price of Opium

5050. SHRI RAMA MUNI REDDYSIRIGIREDDY: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) the price of opium set by Government during the last three years; year-wise;

(b) whether Government have any proposal for increasing the price of opium to curb drug trafficking; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI GINGEE N. RAMACHANDRAN): (a) The procurement price of opium during

crop years 1999-2000,2000-01 and 2001 -02 are as follows:

Average yield (kgs./hect.)	Price (Rs./kg.)
Upto 44 kgs.	630/-
Above 44 kgs. and upto 52 kgs.	650/-
Above 52 kgs. and upto 60 kgs.	800/-
Above 60 kgs. and upto 80 kgs.	1100/-
Above 80 kgs. and upto 100 kgs.	1200/-
Above 100 kgs.	1400/-

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Does not arise.

Inquiry on transfer of copy right by NISCOM

5051. SHRI A. VIJAYARAGHAVAN: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Office of Prime Minister received letter on 5th November, 2001 from member of Parliament for initiating inquiry regarding foreign exchange received by Asian Health Environment and Allied Database and transfer of copy right to it by NISCOM/CSIR; and

(b) if so, the action taken thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI GINGEEV.RAMACHANDRAN):(a)Yes, Sir.The officeofthe Prime Minister had received a letter dated 31 st October, 2001 from Shri A. Vijaya Raghavan, MP. in this regard.

(b) The matter is under consideration of the Ministry of Environment and Forests.

Argentina as a model country

5052. SHRIMATI SARALA MAHESHWAR1: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the fact that the International Monetary Fund (IMF) held out Argentina as a model country since the country had followed all IMF prescriptions, privatized all major sectors and banks and pegged its currency on parity with the US Dollar;